

of the 20th Century, you have heard it by the previous speakers, that is the Armenian genocide.

April 24th marks the 85th anniversary of the start of the first genocide of the 1900's. Before the Holocaust there was the Armenian genocide. It took place between 1915 and 1923 in the Ottoman Empire.

In April of 1915, a weak Ottoman Empire ordered mass deportations of Armenians. This was carried out swiftly and systematically on official orders from the government of the Ottoman Empire. Forced marches resulted in the deaths of over 1 million Armenians. Armenian men of military age were rounded up, marched for several miles and shot dead throughout eastern Anatolia. Women, children, and the elderly, many subjected to rape, were forced to leave their homeland and move to relocation centers in the Syrian desert. During these long marches, no food, water, or shelter was provided. Many died of disease or exhaustion, and survivors were subjected to forcible conversion to Islam.

The annihilation of such a large portion of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire led to the loss of many lives and the dream of an Armenian homeland. Surviving Armenians fled to the then Soviet Union, the United States, and other parts of the world in pursuit of their basic freedoms. Many Armenians live and work in my congressional district in San Diego. Their history and story need to be shared and embraced.

Today, our NATO ally, Turkey, has repeatedly denied the execution of over 1 million Armenians. The denial of this atrocity has proved beneficial for Turkey's foreign policy. The murder of Armenians, a massacre based on cultural and religious beliefs, goes on officially unnoticed, and the United States maintains a favorable relationship and strategic partnership with Turkey.

Mr. Speaker, because of these reasons, I have joined my colleagues in co-sponsoring House Resolution 398, the United States Training on and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution. This resolution provides training and educational materials to all Foreign Service and State Department officials concerning the Armenian genocide.

It is time for our country to stand up and recognize this tragic event. When Hitler conceived of the idea to exterminate the Jewish population, he noted the lack of consequences by saying, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Mr. Speaker, today I and my colleagues speak of the annihilation of the Armenians, and we ask our other colleagues to join in this cause. The story of the Armenian genocide, the forgotten genocide, deserves to be told and understood. We owe it to the Armenians. We owe it to mankind.

## COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the start of the Armenian genocide, one of the most horrific episodes of human history.

In early 1915, Britain and Russia launched major offensives intended to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the first World War. In the east, Russian forces inflicted massive losses on the Ottomans, who reacted by lashing out at the Armenians, whom they accused of undermining the Empire.

On April 24, 1915, the Turkish government began to arrest Armenian community and political leaders suspected of harboring nationalist sentiments. Most of those arrested were executed without ever being charged with crimes.

The government then moved to deport most Armenians from eastern Anatolia, ordering that they resettle in what is now Syria. Many deportees never reached that destination. The U.S. Ambassador in Constantinople at the time, Henry Morgenthau, wrote "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race."

From 1915 to 1918, more than a million Armenians died of starvation or disease on long marches, or were massacred outright by Turkish forces. From 1918 to 1923, Armenians continued to suffer at the hands of the Turkish military, which eventually removed all remaining Armenians from Turkey.

We mark this anniversary each year because this horrible tragedy for the Armenian people was a tragedy for all humanity. We must remember, speak out and teach future generations about the horrors of genocide and the oppression and terrible suffering endured by the Armenian people.

Sadly, genocide is not yet a vestige of the past. In recent years we have witnessed the "killing fields" of Cambodia, mass ethnic killings in Bosnia and Rwanda, and "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo. We must renew our commitment to remain vigilant and prevent such assaults on humanity from occurring ever again.

Even as we remember the tragedy and honor the dead, we also honor the living. Out of the ashes of their history, Armenians all over the world have clung to their identity and prospered in new communities. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians live in California, where they form a strong and vibrant community. The strength they have displayed in overcoming tragedy to flourish in this country is an example for all of us.

Surrounded by countries hostile to them, to this day the Armenian struggle continues. But now with an independent Armenian state, the United States has the opportunity to contribute to a true memorial to the past by strengthening Armenia's emerging democracy. We must do all we can through aid and trade to support Armenia's efforts to construct an open political and economic system.

Adolf Hitler, the architect of the Nazi Holocaust, once remarked "Who remembers the Armenians?" The answer is, we do. And we will continue to remember the victims of the

1915–23 genocide because, in the words of the philosopher George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

## SAY NO TO COMMERCIAL WHALING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, 2 days ago a mighty 35-foot long gray whale washed up on the beach in front of my home on Whidbey Island in Washington State. As a vociferous opponent of killing whales or the expansion of whaling worldwide, and as a lifelong advocate for the environmental health of Puget Sound, this recent event has been the cause of some amount of discussion and publicity in the region surrounding my district. Out of the 1,000 miles of coastline in Washington State, it was certainly an interesting coincidence that the body lodged right on the beach in front of my house.

The death of this gray whale should call our attention to those who would like to reverse the will expressed in Congress and by an overwhelming majority of the American people who oppose allowing the hunting of whales, particularly for commercial purposes.

As I have been predicting from the well of this House and across America for several years, the push for resumption of worldwide commercial whaling is on in earnest. And it is not about heritage, it is all about money. We have heard that a gray whale can be sold in Japan for \$1 million.

Those who want to end the ban on commercial whaling have been using the pretext of restoring whaling rights to indigenous people to expand the scope of whaling worldwide. But if we allow people to use the excuse of historic whale hunting for resumption of whale hunting worldwide, you have got to remember many nations, most nations with coastlines, hunted whales. Japan and Norway definitely would have, as good as anybody, an historic whale hunting opportunity. Japan and Norway are the most notorious now for going ahead and hunting whales.

Newsweek Magazine reported, April 17, information I have already given this body that Japan has been quietly packing the International Whaling Commission with small nations willing to do their bidding, willing to vote for the resumption of commercial whaling.

Mr. Speaker, we are dangerously close to a renewal of the barbaric practice of commercial whaling. To millions of Americans, including myself, this is totally unacceptable. When the Clinton-Gore administration last year financed the Makah tribal whale hunt and colluded with the pro-whaling nations of the International Whaling Commission, our Nation's government lost its moral authority to lead the fight against killing whales for profit.